

Rep. LOIS FRANKEL; Rep. JOE GARCIA; Rep. JOHN MICA; Rep. BILL POSEY; Rep. TOM ROONEY; Rep. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ; Rep. DANIEL WEBSTER; Rep. TED YOHO.

Every Member who attended was provided a comprehensive information on this issue, as well as actions Congress can take to help address this problem.

While I was extremely pleased to have a number of my colleagues attend this briefing to hear directly from our community, we have a long and challenging fight ahead of us to get the message to 200 other Members of the House to ensure that Congress continues to fund and authorize projects and initiatives that will help clean the waters of our local rivers and estuaries.

#### COMMON GOALS

One of the goals of this briefing was to isolate common goals among the many parties and stakeholders in the room. Some of the re-occurring points many stakeholders agree on that need work on the federal level are:

*Continue to advocate to Members of Congress the importance of Everglades restoration funding*

The shocking photos provided by local residents depicting this devastation to the ecosystem were on full display to all Members, as well as the presence of so many concerned citizens speaking personally about how these discharges have impacted them and the community. This education aspect of the briefing was crucial. With the 22 Members who attended, they now can help garner support for important measures related to local environmental projects when they come up for a vote, helping us advocate for the passage of the House Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) and including needed funding in the Administration's budget. But our advocacy work isn't done. We still must make the case that Everglades restoration funding is an important goal that ALL Members of Congress should support.

*Funding to complete Everglades restoration projects*

Everyone agreed that continuing to fight and urge for funding for existing Army Corps projects is crucial. With the involvement of Congress and federal agency officials, we can work together to prioritize funding for ongoing projects such as the C-44 Indian River Lagoon Project, the Kissimmee River restoration project, and other Everglades restoration projects that once completed will provide relief to our imperiled waterways. In order for the entire system to function better, many key components must be able to function. Completing projects that are already under construction will help us most effectively clean the waterways of southern Florida.

*Continued funding to rehabilitate the Herbert Hoover Dike*

One of the biggest problems affecting our waterways is that Lake Okeechobee can only retain a specific amount of water safely. That is why the community agrees that the Army Corps must continue its work of rehabilitating the Herbert Hoover Dike to get it to a state where it can contain more water safely. Holding more water in the lake is the most effective method of water retention in the area, and while this will be a long term project, Congress must act to continue to fund the critical work of rehabilitating this vulnerable structure.

*Passing the House WRRDA bill*

There was also consensus that provisions in the House WRRDA bill will allow state and

federal actors to move forward on Everglades ecosystem restoration, which in turn benefits our district. In addition to passing WRRDA, we also need to continue to pressure for the Chief's Report for the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) so that these important projects can move forward as well. While the CEPP Chief's Report isn't scheduled to be complete until 2014, the timing of passing a final WRRDA bill will be crucial.

*Urging the Corps to safely reexamine the Lake Okeechobee Release Schedule*

Another issue that was discussed is the need for the Army Corps to reevaluate at what level the lake can safely retain water by reassessing the Lake Okeechobee Release Schedule (LORS). I sent a letter to Army Corps officials just prior to the briefing but we must continue to urge them to take this action to reduce these harmful discharges from the lake into the St. Lucie.

*Getting federal agencies more involved on the ground*

Unfortunately, due to a government shutdown, our federal agency panelists were unable to attend. Although we were still able to have a robust and important conversation, it is vital that these federal agencies become more involved. They each have a role to play, and their engagement can be helpful to addressing the river issue. I will be working with my colleagues who attended the briefing to push for this involvement from agencies such as the Army Corps, NOAA, and Fish and Wildlife, as well as invite these officials to see the damage firsthand so they see the urgent need to move forward with these ongoing projects.

There was also unity on the state moving forward quickly and aggressively with their water quality implementation plans.

#### MOVING FORWARD

The briefing successfully brought this important issue into the national spotlight. Unfortunately, we are dealing with a Congress that could not even come together to keep the government open, so a fight for funding to address the pollution impacting our local waterways in the current "no spending" climate will be a challenge, but is a challenge we must take on. There is a difference between wasteful spending, something I've been tackling in the past 10 months, and smart investments such as these projects needed to help our local environment, that provide a three-to-one return on investments. While I can't promise that this issue will be solved in the next year or even the next several years, I do promise to do everything I can to move us towards this end. I remain focused on this issue of great concern to our community, our environment, our economy, and our entire way of life.

HONORING MR. KENNETH TILSEN

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 23, 2013

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Kenneth Tilsen and recognize his contributions to the expansion of liberty and justice inside and outside the courtroom.

Mr. Tilsen measured his success by the number of people he helped, by the body of law he fought to uphold, and by the countless hours he worked to amplify the voices of dis-

advantaged and oppressed peoples. Born to immigrant parents in 1927, Ken learned compassion and understanding through example. His father founded the first company to build integrated housing in Saint Paul. Ken grew up in St. Paul's most racially diverse neighborhood, and attended integrated Marshall High School. He studied Law at the University of Minnesota, graduating at the top of his class in 1950. After practicing as a managing partner at a major firm in the Twin Cities, Mr. Tilsen left to begin his own private practice, so that he could represent anti-war, anti-draft, and civil rights cases. As his son described, "he wanted to define for himself a better kind of law practice and be a better kind of lawyer." And that is exactly what he did.

Mr. Tilsen's career traces a line through some of the most important social movements of our time. He defended the Minnesota 8, who were accused of raiding Selective Service offices in protest of the draft; he represented the Southern Landowners Alliance of Minnesota in a long battle to protect wilderness and farmland from unneeded power lines; he fought as one of the major attorneys of the Wounded Knee Legal Defense/Offense Committee against FBI and police misconduct, and continued the fight against historical revisionism of that case for decades afterward. He worked for the Venezuelan whistle-blower Rene Hurtado, the University of Minnesota's Afro-American Action Committee, and the protesters from the 2008 Republican National Convention in St. Paul. Many powerful individuals disapproved of his work, and he paid for his activism through years of harassment, and even questioning by the House Un-American Activities Committee.

But Mr. Tilsen's body of work did not go unnoticed, and he was recognized with awards such as the ACLU Earl Larson Award, the National Lawyers Guild Lifetime Contribution to Social Justice Award, and being named one of "Minnesota's 100 most influential lawyers of all time."

Mr. Tilsen practiced law until 1993, turning then to teaching at the Hamline University School of Law. "Ken loved the law," his son wrote. "He was personally offended when it was twisted to serve the rich and powerful at the expense of normal people trying to live their lives." He used that passion to better the law—to better the state of Minnesota and to better the United States of America. The legacy Mr. Tilsen leaves is a valuable lesson to every citizen: that our government is only as strong as those who are willing to fight for "the little guy."

THE PASSING OF BILLY THOMPSON HARDMAN

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 23, 2013

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Georgia lost a true champion and advocate for our great State last week. Billy "Bill" Thompson Hardman spent much of his life working to put Georgia on the map as a destination for both domestic and international tourists. His efforts, which spanned decades, helped draw millions to enjoy the wonderful natural and manmade wonders Georgia has to offer.